achieve great popularity. The training is prolonged and exacting. Usually it is begun in early youth, and those who take it serve a kind of apprenticeship. At least during the nineteenth century women did not customarily appear on the stage—a ruling which is said to date from the time of Ch'ien Lung—and men took women's parts. Some men became extraordinarily skillful in female roles. Fairly recently there have been companies made up entirely of women in which the members have displayed marked talent in portraying men.

There has also been a kind of little theatre in the form of puppet shows, in which marionettes are moved about by the operator and the various parts are spoken by the same expert individual. Some marionettes are controlled by strings, some are costumed dolls, and others are translucent and painted, a kind of "shadow doll."

The theatre has been immensely popular, and while in other days an occasional magistrate attempted to prohibit performances, presumably because he believed the money spent on them might more profitably have been invested elsewhere, such efforts have seldom if ever received the support of the public. Perhaps as a result Chinese seem to take almost instinctively to acting a part in social intercourse, and have a penchant for dramatizing themselves and incidents in which they are vitally concerned.

With all this emphasis on the theatre, however, it must be noted that drama in China appears never to have risen to the heights in the portrayal of character and in dealing with some of the persistent problems of human life and destiny that it did in ancient Greece and that it has in some countries of the modern West. The Chinese have not been blind to these

questions, as we have repeatedly seen, and have thought on them profoundly and with acumen. For an expression of their meditations and conclusions on these issues, however, they have chosen other vehicles, notably philosophy. Drama, therefore, has not occupied the prominent place in serious Chinese literature that it has held in some lands of the Occident. In China the theatre has remained more exclusively a diversion.

Closely akin to the theatre has been the professional storyteller. For many centuries his seems to have been an accepted occupation. He finds his audiences at tea shops, where the oro-